

# Candidate Pre-Employment Testing Information Guide



**Brought to you by:**  
Talent Acquisition and Selection  
Workforce Operations Management  
Human Resources

## **Congratulations!**

Congratulations on taking a step towards your career advancement with Colorado Springs Utilities. This guide has been developed to answer questions you may have about pre-employment testing in our recruitment and selection process.

In this guide, you will find information on the type of pre-employment tests we generally give at Colorado Springs Utilities, helpful hints on the best ways to prepare for a test, answers to frequently asked questions, techniques for reducing test anxiety, and information on how to obtain test accommodations if you are a qualified individual with a disability under the American With Disabilities Act.

We have learned from many years of experience the key to our success is its people. At Colorado Springs Utilities, we put the right people in the right positions at the right time. We do this through a selection process which uses a variety of tools customized to gather critical information from candidates in the most fair and consistent manner possible. We anticipate you will find this guide helpful in your preparation for employment with Colorado Springs Utilities or as you take steps through the promotional process.

We wish you the best of luck in your new opportunity.

### **Talent Acquisition and Selection Colorado Springs Utilities**



## **Overview of Pre-employment Testing at Colorado Springs Utilities**

Colorado Springs Utilities uses a competitive process to determine top candidates for selection. Once you apply for a job at Colorado Springs Utilities, you may be asked to take a pre-employment test as part of our selection process. These tests are validated measures which help assess your level of knowledge, skill and ability for a particular job. The use of pre-employment tests is a fair and effective process for gathering objective information about candidates on job-related components. Organizations large and small use various forms of pre-employment testing to predict or assess how well an individual may perform on the job. Pre-employment testing shows the organization has really thought through what it wants in the person for the job.

Colorado Springs Utilities uses one or a combination of standardized pre-employment tests, including Web-based assessments, knowledge tests, training and experience evaluations, structured interviews, basic skills tests, work samples, presentation exercises, analysis exercises, or any other assessments deemed appropriate for the position. These types of tests measure a candidate's knowledge, skills, abilities (KSA's) or competencies necessary to perform a particular component of the job.

The types of tests administered at Colorado Springs Utilities are developed in accordance with the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures and are validated to predict job performance in the most fair, useful, reliable and efficient manner possible.

Colorado Springs Utilities is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer. No person shall be unlawfully discriminated against because of race, color, national origin or ancestry, sex, age, religious convictions, veteran status, disability, political beliefs, or sexual orientation. Affirmative Action is Colorado Springs Utilities' effort to ensure positive steps are taken to have a representative workforce reflective of the relevant available labor force.

Human Resources shall assure Colorado Springs Utilities' benefits, classification, compensation, employee development, employee relations, and employment programs, conform to current legal and regulatory requirements and the provisions of Colorado Springs Utilities' Affirmative Action Plan.

The CEO and the Officers are accountable for assuring Colorado Springs Utilities' accomplishment of Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action.

### **Accommodation Requests under the Americans with Disabilities Act**

We are committed to providing reasonable and appropriate accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act to enable individuals with documented disabilities to take required pre-employment tests.

If you have a qualified disability covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act you believe may limit your ability to take a pre-employment test, you may request a reasonable accommodation. To request an accommodation:

- Contact our resource center at (719) 668-7500
- Send us an e-mail at [csurecruiting@csu.org](mailto:csurecruiting@csu.org)

## Frequently Asked Questions about the Pre-Employment Testing Process

Here are some of the most frequently asked questions about the pre-employment testing process at Colorado Springs Utilities:

### 1. Why might I have to take a test at Colorado Springs Utilities?

Standardized pre-employment testing helps evaluate candidates in a fair, consistent and effective manner. A pre-employment test allows the candidate to go above and beyond the information they provide on an application or resume and gives them the opportunity to *demonstrate* their qualifications.

### 2. What are the benefits of using a pre-employment test?

Pre-employment testing leads to a more productive workforce because test results can be accurate predictors of future job performance. Tests are among the most objective means of predicting performance for certain job components. They can determine the extent to which the candidate has the capacity to perform well on parts of the job.

There are several benefits to using Pre-employment tests:

- Introduces a completely objective tool into the hiring process
- Helps identify which candidates are the most qualified for a position
- Assists hiring managers in making better hiring decisions by providing them with fair, job-related data
- Gives candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge; which is a better indicator of job performance for certain job components than an application or resume alone
- Provides a consistent basis of comparison to other candidates within a job
- Compares actual candidate abilities to the needs and criteria of the specific job

Through testing, we are able to deliver candidates which have been properly assessed on critical job-related components; candidates which have *demonstrated* to us their job-related skills. This objective data point assists our Selecting Authorities in making more informed interview and hiring decisions and provides candidates an equal playing field in comparing their skill sets.

### 3. If I am asked to take a pre-employment test for a certain position, am I required to complete the testing?

Yes. All pre-employment tests at Colorado Springs Utilities must be completed by the deadline given. If a candidate chooses not to complete required testing, they withdraw themselves from the remainder of the selection process.

#### 4. I have been asked to take a test from a vendor called SHL. What do I need to do to ensure my testing experience is as smooth as possible?

Colorado Springs Utilities has contracted with a large national testing vendor called SHL (<http://www.shl.com/us>). Using this vendor allows us to assess candidate skills fast and accurately through online technology but does require candidates to make sure their computers are ready.

Candidates should go to <http://service.shl.com/s2p-candidates/> for a list of system requirements and frequently asked questions before they begin their test. Candidates can also contact SHL directly at 800-899-7451, Option 1 (M-F 6:00 AM – 6:00 PM, Mountain Standard Time) or email them at [helpdesk.americas@shlgroup.com](mailto:helpdesk.americas@shlgroup.com).

#### 5. What types of pre-employment tests or assessments does Colorado Springs Utilities administer?

Pre-employment tests are administered at the job application phase, at the interview phase, or at any time in between, as deemed appropriate. Some of the tests we administer include:

Test Type	Description
Job Knowledge	A knowledge-based test is typically multiple-choice. Used for jobs requiring a specific knowledge component which can best be measured by a broad sampling of the subject matter area
Skills Test	Requires the candidate to demonstrate a particular skill such as a computer-based software program or data entry test
Leadership Assessment	Assesses competencies found to be critical for first-line supervisors; measures supervisory potential
Structured Interview	An in-person panel interview where candidate responses are compared to appropriate job-related criteria. All hiring interviews at Colorado Springs Utilities are <i>structured</i> interviews; all candidates are asked the same questions and rated on the same criteria
Analysis Exercise	Requires the candidate to review data from various sources, draw conclusions and present an analytical summary of those conclusions
Behavioral Trait Measures	Tests that assess a potential fit to a position such as dependability, motivation, learning agility, work ethic, attention to detail, etc.
Cognitive Ability/Aptitude	Tests which measure basic cognitive aptitude such as critical thinking, reasoning, mechanical aptitude, problem solving skills, etc.
Presentation Exercise	An exercise which requires the candidate to make a presentation on a subject related to the job

Training & Experience Evaluation	An extensive review of written candidate supplemental information. The candidate is asked to respond to 3-5 in-depth behaviorally focused questions. Responses are reviewed by subject matter experts and compared to job-related benchmarks
Work Sample/ Performance Test	A skills-based test which requires the candidate to demonstrate a skill. Similar to the Skills Test, but is typically hands-on assessing a physical skill such as operating equipment, driving, performing a physical task, etc.
Writing Exercise	Candidate is asked to complete a writing sample which will provide information on their writing skills, organization, content development, and grammatical skills

## **6. How do you make referral decisions based upon my test score?**

The results of your pre-employment test, along with other selection components help determine whether you will be referred to the individual making the hiring decision for interview consideration. This follows the model of the “whole-person” approach to assessment, which includes measures of basic skills, preferred qualifications, standardized pre-employment testing, or any other combination of assessments deemed appropriate for the position. A high test score will not guarantee your name is sent to the hiring manager nor does it guarantee an interview, but it does increase your chances.

## **7. How can I best prepare to take a pre-employment test at Colorado Springs Utilities?**

Prepare yourself and get as much information as you can about the position for which you have applied and are being asked to test. Read the job posting carefully and make an honest assessment of your skills. Think through each of the qualifications required for the job and ask yourself how you measure up. Be critical of your skills. Remember, meeting the basic qualifications is only the *first* hurdle in the selection process.

## **8. Will I be notified of my Pre-employment test results?**

Since Colorado Springs Utilities looks at various factors in making referral decisions, pre-employment test scores are not shared with candidates.

## **9. I've been notified that I need to take a test that I have already taken. Can I transfer my score?**

Yes. Test scores are valid for 6 months unless the job significantly changes and a new test must be developed for the position. If you are testing in the SHL system, your will enter your name and previous information and your test score will automatically transfer.

## **10. Is there a process to review my test score?**

Colorado Springs Utilities encourages candidates to prepare prior to taking the test. Once the test is administered, since we make decisions based on the “whole person” approach, we do

not provide test reviews for candidates.

**11. I received a schedule notice for a proctored test and I am unable to make the date. Can I reschedule to take the exam on a different day?**

Unless another scheduled date and time is available, all pre-employment tests must be taken on the scheduled date and time.

**12. I get really anxious before I have to take a test. Is there anything that I can do?**

Preparing for a test isn't easy, and most test takers experience some sort of test anxiety. Test anxiety refers to the emotional responses to tension or stress resulting from nervousness for upcoming exams. The most common symptom is a mental block or "freeze up". A person with test anxiety may find the words meaningless while reading test questions or have a need to re-read test questions several times before understanding them. Other symptoms that are common are panic, difficulty concentrating, physical discomfort or forgetting information at the time of the test. Remember that it is normal to be a little anxious. Approach the test with confidence and remember that no one is expected to know all of the answers.

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There are numerous web sites which candidates can read on test anxiety. Here are a few strategies which have been found to be effective:

- For a proctored test, arrive early. Tests start promptly at their scheduled time. If you are late, you *may not* be admitted to the test and may not be re-scheduled. Allow time for traffic, parking and finding the test room.
- For an online test, wait for the most appropriate time to take the test when you have time to concentrate and are not rushed. It's a good idea to take the test when you know you will have no other distractions.
- Being well prepared for the test is the best way to reduce test taking anxiety. Assess your skills and the position for which you are testing.
- Try to maintain a positive attitude. Think positively about the test and your abilities.
- Stay relaxed, if you begin to get nervous take a few deep breaths slowly to relax yourself and then get back to work.
- Listen or read the directions slowly and carefully.
- For a proctored test, don't worry about how fast other people finish their test; just concentrate on your own test.
- If the test allows and you don't know a question, skip it for the time being (come back to it later if you have time), and remember that you don't have to get every question right to do well on the test.



- Read each question and possible answer carefully. Sometimes people answer the question they think is being asked, rather than the actual question being asked.

**13. Who can I contact if I have any other questions or feedback?**

For additional questions regarding our testing process, please contact the Utilities Human Resource Service Center at (719) 668-7500. They will put you in contact with one of our professionals who is available to answer any additional questions you may have.